

NWS
AUSTIN/SAN ANTONIO

HAIL

REPORTING:

- Hail reports are vital to accurate warnings.
- Measure hail properly.
- Good hail reports are needed, especially in rural areas.
- Use CoCoRaHS to report hail.

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South Central Texas

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

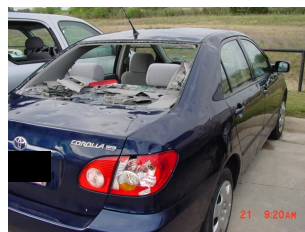


FEBRUARY 2009

CoCoRaHS Hail Reports Vital to NWS

The National Weather Service is responsible for issuing severe weather warnings to protect the lives and property of Americans. In South Central Texas, that duty is carried out by the men and women of the Weather Forecast Office in New Braunfels. Using the latest radar and satellite technology we warn the public of impending life threatening and damaging weather events. One such event is the severe thunderstorm that produces large hail which we define as any hail 3/4" or larger. While we can use the radar to look into storms and estimate the size

of hail they may be producing, what we can't do is see that hail with our own eyes and



Hail damaged car in San Marcos, TX. April 20, 2006

verify its size.

That's where you come in. We need you to be our eyes in the field to confirm what size hail is actually falling. This helps us in two ways. First it

helps us "calibrate" the radar on any particular day. We can learn for that day that the radar echo we are seeing is producing a certain hail size. (cont. on page 4)



Hail stones collected at Austin, TX. May 15, 2008

Reporting Hail in CoCoRaHS

CoCoRaHS makes it easy to report hail. Log on to the website and under the Enter My New Reports menu select Hail (see image at right). This will bring you to Hail Report Form (see image on page 3). By filling in this form, your hail report will be sent to CoCoRaHS and the National Weather Service. Let's take a



My Data Entry : Hail Report Form

Hail Report Form	
Station Number :	TX-BXR-9
Station Name :	Hollywood Park 2.6 N
Denotes Required Field	
8/13/2008	*Date of Hail Storm
AM	Time Hail Storm Began
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Report was taken at reg	

closer look at the form and discuss some important details to be aware of.

Most of the form is self explanatory. The first thing we want (continued on page 3)

History of Hail Reports in South Central Texas

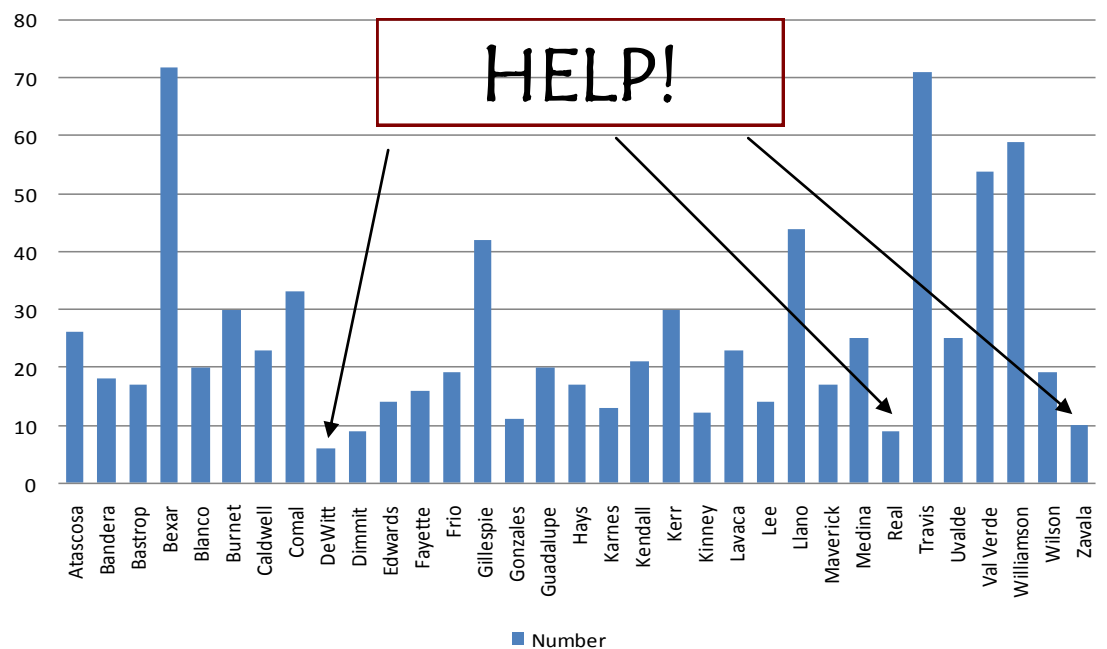
The following set of charts shows the reports of severe hail in South Central Texas from 1998 to 2006. Severe hail is defined as any hail three quarters of an inch or larger.

The chart to the right shows the reports by county. Not surprisingly the greatest number of reports come from the counties with the largest populations.

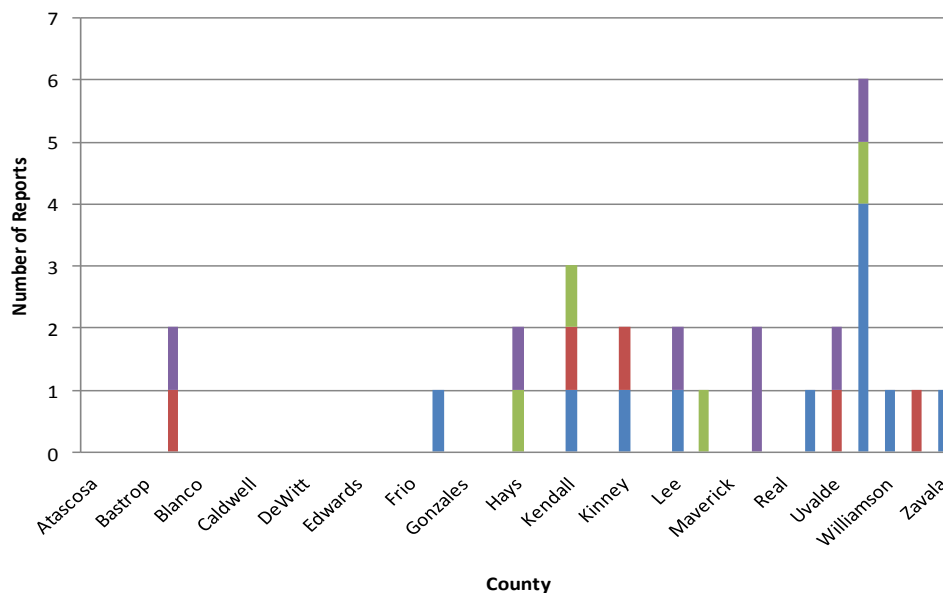
There are a few counties where we can really use help.

**COCORAH'S
SOUTH
CENTRAL
TEXAS**

**Severe Hail Reports by County
1998 - 2006**



**Reports of Hail ≥ 3 Inches
by County**



At the left, we see the counties where very large hail (3 in. or greater) has been reported. Val Verde county (not labeled) has had the greatest number of very large hail events with six and Kendall is second with three. These reports seem to be independent of population.

Reporting Hail in CoCoRaHS (Cont.)

to point out is the Time Hail Storm Began (number 1 at right). It's important to note the time that the hail fell and not the time of the report. If you see the hail storm begin, remember the time, but wait until it's safe to go out and measure the hail. We want to know when the hail actually fell, not when you were able to report it. This helps the National Weather Service verify our warnings.

The screenshot shows the 'My Data Entry : Hail Report Form' interface. The form includes fields for Station Number (TX-BXR-8), Station Name (Hollywood Park 2.5 N), Date of Hail Storm (8/28/2008), and Time Hail Storm Began (1:00 AM). A red box highlights the 'Time Hail Storm Began' field with a red circle '1' next to it. Another red box highlights the 'Report was taken at registered location?' field with a red circle '2' next to it. The form also includes sections for 'Size of hailstones' (Smallest, Average, Largest) and 'Hail Lasted' (Minutes).

The screenshot shows the 'Hail pad information' section of the form. It includes fields for 'Number of indentations on pad', 'Average distance between hailstone indentations on your pad' (inches apart), and 'Was any hail preserved?' (Yes/No). A red box highlights the 'Notes' section at the bottom of this part of the form.

The second thing to notice is that the form allows you to report hail that did not fall at your registered location. If you are away from your location and experience a hail storm, you can report it later by selecting "No" in the "Report was taken at registered location?" box (number 2 in image above). Then you can give the location where you saw the hail in the "Notes" section at the bottom of the form (see image at left). Be as accurate as possible with this location.

In the "Size of hailstones" box (see image at right), the most important entry is the "Largest". The others are helpful, but not essential. The drop down menus give you the acceptable sizes to report.

The screenshot shows the 'Size of hailstones' section of the form. It includes dropdown menus for 'Smallest', 'Average', and 'Largest' hailstone sizes. A red box highlights the 'Largest' dropdown menu.



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"Because every drop counts"

CoCoRaHS is a grassroots volunteer network of backyard weather observers of all ages and backgrounds working together to measure and map precipitation (rain, hail and snow) in their local communities. By using low-cost measurement tools, stressing training and education, and utilizing an interactive Web-site, our aim is to provide the highest quality data for natural resource, education and research applications. The only requirements to join are an enthusiasm for watching and reporting weather conditions and a desire to learn more about how weather can effect and impact our lives.

Our Web page provides the ability for our observers to see their observations mapped out in "real time", as well as providing a wealth of information for our data users.



Hail Reports Vital (Cont.)

Second, your report can lead to additional warnings, or even the cancellation of warnings in and near your location. These reports are vital to our severe weather operations.



**Large hail in Blanco County
April 20, 2006 (Photo courtesy of Liz Lindig)**